

come, and get beyond any bigotry that we have in ourselves. This is a Nation of tolerance and diversity, and we must celebrate it. I encourage everybody to learn about black history and the Tuskegee Airmen, our great vehicle.

FREEDOM AND THE INTERNET, VICTORIOUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, long ago, Jefferson warned: "The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground." The exceptions to that rule have been few and far between recently; and they ought to be celebrated when they occur, as one did just this past week with the announcement that the supporters of the so-called Stop Online Privacy Act and the Protect Intellectual Property Act have indefinitely postponed their measures after an unprecedented protest across the Internet.

SOPA and PIPA pose a crippling danger to the Internet because they use legitimate concern over copyright infringement as an excuse for government to intrude upon and regulate the very essence of the Internet—the unrestricted and absolutely free association that links site to site, providing infinite pathways for commerce, discourse, and learning. It is not the Internet, per se, that sets the stage for a quantum leap in human knowledge advancement but, rather, the free association that's at the core of the Internet; and this is precisely what SOPA and PIPA directly threaten.

But as dangerous as this concept is to the Internet, it pales in comparison to the danger it poses to our fundamental freedoms as Americans. It is true that rogue Web sites operating from offshore havens are stealing intellectual property and then selling it. We already have very good laws against that, as evidenced by the arrest yesterday of Mr. Kim Schmitz and his associates in New Zealand who stand accused of operating one of the biggest of these rogue sites.

Theft of intellectual property is fundamentally no different than the theft of any other kind of property. It should be taken no less seriously than the thefts perpetrated by the likes of Bernie Madoff or John Dillinger or Willie Sutton. It is no different, and it should be treated no differently. In every such case, it is the individual who commits the theft; and it is the individual who is culpable and the individual who is accountable to the law; and it's the individual who is also accorded the right of due process, including the presumption of innocence while he stands accused. That's what SOPA and PIPA destroy.

Upon mere accusation, these measures would allow the government to shut down Web sites, ruin honest busi-

nesses, impound property, disrupt legitimate speech, and drag innocent third parties into enforcing laws that may or may not have been broken.

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When property is stolen, we hold accountable the individuals who knowingly commit the act and place the burden of proof on the accuser. The accuser must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the jury that the defendant stole property or that he received property that he knew was stolen.

Yes, it is a ponderous system. Yes, it means you actually have to provide evidence. Yes, it means you have to convince a jury. Yes, it means that we can't catch and successfully prosecute every criminal. But the experience of mankind over centuries has proven that this is the best possible way to protect the innocent and protect our freedom while also punishing the guilty. In part, we punish the guilty to discourage others that we might not be able to punish.

As the arrests yesterday in New Zealand prove, it works. Let Mr. Schmitz and his confederates be extradited, and let them have their day in court. Let evidence be presented. Let a jury be convinced of that evidence. And if convicted of one of the greatest thefts in human history, let us mete out the full measure of punishment provided by the law to stand as a fearsome example to others.

This doesn't and won't stop all theft, and it isn't perfect. But to replace it with one where mere accusation can bring punishment or inflict ruinous costs upon innocent third parties would introduce a despotic and destructive concept that is antithetical to the ancient rights that our government was formed to protect.

The developments of the last few weeks have saved the Internet and saved these fundamental principles, at least for now. But Jefferson was right that the natural order is for government to grow at the expense of liberty. That's why we have our Constitution.

As to the protection of that Constitution, the Internet has now empowered its rightful owners—"we, the people"—to defend it more effectively than ever before, which leads me, Madam Speaker, to conclude that because of the events of the past week, we will see many more victories for freedom in the days and years to come.

CONGRATULATING BRUCE McMILLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of an Eagle Scout who is planning for retirement after 37 years of distinguished professional service to the Boy Scouts of America. Bruce "Trip" McMillan will retire as the

Area 4 director for the Northeast Region of the Boy Scouts of America.

Bruce McMillan received his bachelor's degree from Montclair State University. He is a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow and a Wood Badge recipient. He has staffed jamborees, camp schools, and countless training events.

His career serving America's youth began in 1975 as a district executive in Wayne, New Jersey. Since then, he went on to serve as a Scout executive in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Trip was then promoted to the Northeast Region Area 4 staff in 2001 and Area 4 director in 2008.

In all capacities, Trip has served with great distinction, earning the respect and admiration of all he has served over a remarkable career. Congratulations to Trip and his devoted wife, Diane.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize a friend and scouting professional who has touched the lives of so many youth in his service to scouting. Well done, Scouter.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARPER. Madam Speaker, I am deeply disappointed by President Obama's decision to deny TransCanada's application to build the Keystone XL pipeline. I know that many of my colleagues in the House, Members of the Senate, and citizens across this country share my disappointment and near disbelief. I say "near" disbelief rather than "complete" because while an approval of the application made sense to so many, I had a feeling that the President would continue down a path of making political decisions instead of decisions based on merit and what is best for our country, much like the knee-jerk reaction and decision to shut down drilling in the Gulf of Mexico after the Deepwater Horizon explosion on April 20, 2010.

Instead of shutting down the negligent parties involved in the explosion, the President shut down an entire industry for 6 months, and then it took almost another 6 months before the first permit was issued—almost a 1-year delay that cost thousands of families their jobs. While the President may talk about energy independence, I question whether he understands the role that oil plays in our economy and will continue to play in our Nation's energy portfolio. Even worse would be if he does understand and is just making political decisions.

The application for Keystone XL has been pending for over 3 years; and even though history shows that these types of applications generally take 18 months to approve, the President said that a February 21, 2012, deadline imposed by Congress did not give him enough time to properly review the application. The Keystone XL application